

No. 24- Poso Creek Integrated Regional Water Management Region

Region Acceptance Process Summary

General Description of Region

The Poso Creek Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Region, in the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region, was developed in 2005 and their IRWM Plan was adopted in July 2007. This Region covers a portion, over 600,000 acres (938 square miles), of Kern County and a smaller portion of Tulare County. Most of the Poso Creek IRWM Region is located within the Kern County IRWM Region.

The Poso Creek Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) consists of six agricultural water districts and one resource conservation district. Stakeholders participating in the Poso Creek IRWM Region also include local communities, Tulare Lake Wildlife partners, and other environmental groups. Since 2007, the RWMG has conducted regular monthly meetings. The RWMG members share the same groundwater basin and they seem to effectively collaborate on water banking and groundwater recharge programs.

The Community Water Center, a Non-Governmental Organization representing Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) interests, has identified about several concerns they have regarding the Poso Creek RWMG governance structure and DAC outreach. As a result, the Poso Creek RWMG has recently improved their efforts to address DAC needs in the Poso Creek IRWM Region. DWR strongly encourages the Poso Creek IRWM Region to continue their current efforts to effectively include DACs into Poso Creek IRWM planning efforts.

Interview Conclusions- Conditional Approval for Implementation Funding Only

DWR conditionally approves the Poso Creek IRWM Region to allow this Region to compete for implementation funding from Senate Bill XX1 (SBXX1) (Perata, Stats. 2008, Ch. 1), California Water Code §83000-83002.7.

DWR encourages the Poso Creek IRWM Region and the surrounding IRWM efforts (including Kern County) to explore options on how best to structure the regional boundaries in the area. DWR's intent is to facilitate future communication and cooperation between surrounding IRWM regions, to develop

an optimal IRWM region(s) that fosters integration and cooperation and does not result in overlapping and competing planning efforts. Nearby “gap” areas, not covered by the Poso Creek, Kern County, Tule River, Kaweah River, or Southern Sierra IRWM Regions should also be considered for inclusion in the IRWM planning effort.

This stated communication and cooperation, optimal region development, as well as inclusion of “gap” areas, will be considered when determining future region approval and eligibility for subsequent funding rounds.